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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 31 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

According to mass media reports, Armenian armed forces conducted on 25 October 2008 military exercises in the Nagorny Karabakh region and other occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These exercises were observed by President Serzh Sargsyan and Minister of Defence Seyran Oganyan of the Republic of Armenia. Clarifications were made by the Armenian side as to the purposes of such sabre-rattling. Thus, the representatives of Armenia's subordinate separatist regime in the occupied territories made it clear that the exercises had been aimed at working out solely offensive actions, including the initiation of military operations and redeployment of troops beyond the occupied territories far inland of Azerbaijan.

Against this background, attention must be drawn to the fact that the aforementioned military exercises and hostile statements coincide with international efforts towards the settlement of the conflict and testify that Armenia is far from even thinking of engaging in a sober and efficient search for peace.

Contrary to the numerous statements of official Yerevan that Armenia is not directly involved in the conflict with Azerbaijan, there is a convincing body of evidence attesting to the direct military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan. According to available evidence, the military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, conducted in the presence of the President and Minister of Defence of Armenia, are yet another illustration of the effective military and political control by Armenia of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, exercised either directly by its own armed forces or indirectly through the subordinate separatist regime, which survives by virtue of Armenia's military and other support.

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It should be recalled in this regard that the Security Council, in its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), adopted in response to an armed attack against Azerbaijan and the subsequent occupation of its territories, reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the international borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate cessation of all hostile acts, as well as the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On 14 March 2008, the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/243 on the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Seriously concerned that the armed conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued to endanger international peace and security, the General Assembly reaffirmed its continued strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders, demanding the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

None of the aforementioned resolutions was implemented by Armenia, which continues to take purposeful measures to consolidate the status quo of the occupation and build up its military presence in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, in bringing attention to the provocative actions of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and Armenia's unconcealed propaganda for war of aggression and threat of the use of force, expects that Member States would convince Armenia to cease its destructive policies, to respect the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and to negotiate in good faith with a view to finding a durable solution to the conflict.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Agshin **Mehdiyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative